

Message Text

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SUBJECT: RAILWAY UNIONS SETTLE

1. SEVENTEEN ASSOCIATED RAILWAY UNIONS REPRESENTING 94,000 WORKERS HAVE ACCEPTED A ONE-YEAR CONTRACT, RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 1978, ALLOWING FOR A 6.17 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE PACKAGE. SEVERAL UNION OFFICERS WHO NEGOTIATED THE NEW COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT EXPLAINED THAT THE 6.17 PERCENT INCREASE WAS WITHIN THE LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY THE ANTI-INFLATION BOARD BUT THAT IT WAS RATIFIED BY ONLY 53 PERCENT OF THE MEMBERSHIP. THESE SAME LEADERS EXPRESSED SINCERE DOUBTS ABOUT PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW NATIONAL AGREEMENT BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 1979. IN FACT, THEY HAVE ALREADY BEGUN MEMBERSHIP PLANNING SESSIONS TO DETERMINE WHAT THEY CALL A "CATCH-UP" WAGE DEMAND FOR BARGAINING SESSIONS THAT WILL BEGIN IN AUGUST 1978. IN THE WORDS OF ONE LEADER OF THE 40,000-MEMBER CANADIAN BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY, TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION, NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE NEXT CONTRACT ARE GOING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT. HE SAID MOST OF HIS MEMBERS AVERAGE AROUND 11,000 DOLLARS A YEAR AND ARE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN A REASONABLE STANDARD OF LIVING. HE DID NOT THINK

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THE SEVENTEEN UNIONS THAT COLLECTIVELY NEGOTIATE WITH THE CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS AND THE CP RAIL COMPANY WOULD BE ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING TALKS, WHICH, IN HIS OPINION, MAY MEAN UNDISCIPLINED ACTIONS ON THE PART OF SOME OF THE NEGOTIATING UNIONS NEXT JANUARY. EVEN NOW THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL

WORKERS, TWO OF THE SEVENTEEN NEGOTIATING UNIONS, ARE
BALKING OVER ACCEPTANCE OF THE 6.17 PERCENT WAGE SETTLEMENT.

2. COMMENT: THE CLOSE RATIFICATION VOTE IS AN INDICATOR
OF THE WORKINGMAN'S DISCONTENT WITH HIS REAL EARNINGS AND
A FORECAST OF DIFFICULT LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS IN THE
POST ANTI-INFLATION CONTROL PERIOD BEGINNING IN LATE 1978
AND EARLY 1979. ENDERS

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